

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



WHY PLAN?

For a city to retain its long term economic health, population and employment bases, it must look to what the future holds and plan appropriately. Planning efforts are undertaken to allow a community and its leaders the chance to look at their surroundings and evaluate and formulate ideas and/or recommendations on how to add to or improve the city in the future.

Planning also allows city officials to address current problems and conflicts within the community. An example of a problem or conflict would be continued traffic congestion within certain areas of the city. With the completion of an effective thoroughfare plan, city officials can help solve or relieve such problems in the future.

Many different considerations are taken into account when a community goes through the planning process. Some of these considerations include looking at community demographics, economic trends, utility structures, and transportation. Each of these considerations is looked at individually and then together as a whole to review how they affect one another.

PREVIOUS COMPREHNSIVE PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Troy has been very proactive in planning for its community in the past several decades. In addition to this particular Comprehensive Plan, several additional Master Plans, Comprehensive Plans and Updates, strategic plans, and studies have been conducted and compiled throughout the years.

In 1961, a Master Plan was completed by Harland Bartholomew and Associates. This plan offered general recommendations on utility services, community facilities, thoroughfare networks, and land use development patterns. A second planning effort was the 1972 Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Dalton, Dalton, Little, and Newport, which also focused on thoroughfares, community facilities, and the central business district. The most recent and complete update was done in 1989 by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission. This plan was a little different from the others in that it focused on geophysical conditions, population, economic bases, and housing.

CURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS

Additional planning efforts in the past have included a Master Plan for Parks and Recreation in 1980 and in 1990 and a 1987 Source Protection Program for the City's water supply. More recent studies and plans have included the 2000 Downtown Development Plan, the 2001 Troy Development Council Strategy, the Troy City Schools Five-Year Strategic Study Plan, and the Troy Fire Department Strategic Study and Proposed Master Plan.

Beyond the considerations that were described above, the City of Troy also looks to various other sources for planning information. The primary demographic source is the United States Decennial Census. Conducted every ten years, the Census shows population demographics in a variety of areas including age, sex, housing, race, income, educational attainment, etc. Information within this particular Comprehensive Plan can be dated back to the 1910 Census.

In addition to the Census, community groups, individual departments within the City government, and the public play a role in the planning process. Certain community groups and City departments have conducted individual studies and have created strategic plans to guide their causes. These studies and plans have been seen as informational tools for the Planning Department. The public also has been involved by participating in visioning sessions and opinion surveys.

COMMUNITY GROUPS' PLANNING EFFORTS

There are several community groups within the City of Troy that share a close relationship with City officials in regards to planning. Two, in particular, have put together strategic plans, which the City uses as a part of their planning process. These include the Troy Development Council and the Troy City School District.

The 2001 Troy Development Council

In March 2001, the Troy Development Council (TDC), whose structure and role in the community will be explained later in this Plan, researched and developed a strategy for future community and economic development in the Troy area. The strategy was developed with the assistance of groups such as the Miami Valley Economic Development Coalition, Dayton Power & Light, and the Ohio Department of Development.

The foundation for the strategy was to look at ways to foster retention, expansion, and competitiveness of Troy-area businesses. The TDC stated that by continuing to attract and retain high quality businesses to Troy, this would drive long-term economic health.

The strategy examined several different aspects including Troy's economic environment, citizen goals, business retention, expansion and support, community marketing, and product development.

The TDC conducted 372 randomly selected household telephone interviews across the City of Troy. After this statistically rigorous survey was conducted, it was found that citizens, like their community, are optimistic about its future and they very strongly support economic development.

A copy of the Troy Development Council Strategy and Survey Results can be viewed in Appendix A.

The Troy City Schools Five Year Strategic Plan

The Troy City Schools share a close relationship with the City of Troy. Community Planning on the City's part plays a big role in the success of the district and enrollment rates. Strategic Planning on the school's part ensures that the school system will be attractive to citizens with children in outside communities who are thinking of relocating to Troy. A copy of the Strategic Plan can be found in Appendix E.

The Troy City Schools 2002-2003 Academic, Financial, And Facilities Report

Reports such as the Troy City Schools 2002-2003 Academic, Financial and Facilities Report are crucial to economic development for any city. Many times businesses and individuals will look at a school district and its standing before making a decision to locate within the city. If a city has poor schools, then locating there would be unlikely. On the other hand, if the city has a strong school system, locating there would be more likely.

This school report shows both the positives and negatives of the Troy School District. First, academic growth is discussed. Troy's schools have steadily increased their academic achievements over the past several years. This has led to a "Continuous Improvement" rating on the 2002-2003 State Report Card

The report also discusses the district's financial standing. When a district is in good financial condition, it is more likely to be successful because it will have the ability to purchase the resources needed for success. Currently, the Troy City School District is in good fiscal standing. Fiscal year 2003 marked the fifth consecutive year the District's revenues exceeded expenses.

The last part of the report discusses the District's facilities. Because of the excellent upkeep of the buildings, these facilities are becoming some of the oldest in the region. In order to continue attracting families to the community, the schools must maintain standards equal to or better than other schools in the area. The District is very well

aware of this fact and is currently in the process of completing a Facilities Study to determine the future of its buildings.

A copy of the 2002-2003 Academic, Financial, and Facilities Report can be found in Appendix D.

CITY OF TROY DEPARTMENTAL STUDIES AND PLANS

Individual departments within the City of Troy have researched and compiled individual studies and strategic plans in regards to issues that affect their areas. These plans are yet another valuable tool for City officials to utilize when in the planning process.

Edsall Master Plan For Troy Recreation And School Facilities

In 1980 and 1990, the City hired Edsall & Associates of Columbus, Ohio to research and compile a Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and school facilities within the City of Troy. The plan looked at community needs, goals, and objectives as well as existing park and school facility structures.

Additional information on the Master Plan is included in Chapter 12 “Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces” in the Comprehensive Plan.

Troy Fire Department Strategic Study and Proposed Master Plan

In March 2003, the Troy Fire Department hired Architectural Resources Corporation to conduct a study that reviewed the City’s long term needs and trends. High risk areas of the community were studied as well as the Department’s ability to respond to emergency calls effectively. Out of this study came a Master Plan which gives recommendations for the Fire Department to plan the future improvement of fire services offered in the City of Troy and its contracted service area. Further information can be found later in this Comprehensive Plan or excerpts of the Study and Proposed Master Plan can be found in Appendix C.

2000 Downtown Development Plan

In 2000, the Troy Planning and Development Department prepared a Development Plan that focused on the past, present, and future of the Downtown Troy area. This area is seen as a focal point in the City, rich in history and architecture. The plan starts with a history and early planning efforts section which outline the progression of where the Downtown Troy was and where it is headed. The next section focuses on the last quarter-century. In this section it was pointed out that economic decline was starting to occur in the Downtown Troy area. Businesses were moving or closing, and properties were not being maintained. A need for revitalization was seen for improvement and to attract new owners to the area.

In the 1990's, Troy Main Street, Inc. was formed to help promote Downtown Troy. Also during this time, remodeling and expansion of the Downtown area was initiated. Some major efforts during this time included the renovation of City Hall, Downtown Streetscape Program Phases I and II, amended zoning codes and the initiation of the Downtown Building Repair Loan Program. The goal of these efforts was to extend the life of the Historic District and increase economic viability of the commercial enterprises in Downtown Troy.

The Downtown Development Plan also looked at highlights in regards to the Downtown area from the previous Comprehensive Plan Update in 1989. These highlights included housing, public facilities, land use plan, and thoroughfare and traffic plans. The effect of the 1996 Downtown Parking Plan and the Signage Plan were also discussed.

The Downtown Development Plan is still in effect and the improvements that have resulted are readily apparent even to casual visitors.

A copy of the 2000 Downtown Development Plan is located in Appendix F.

2003 Downtown Business Opinion Survey

In February 2003, the Troy Planning and Development Department and the Downtown Business Association conducted a survey of all Downtown Troy business owners. This survey looked at a variety of subjects and is still used as a tool for the Planning Department in regards to future Downtown Troy development.

Business owners were asked questions about what they liked best about Downtown Troy, what do their customers like best, what does Downtown need more of, what does Downtown need less of, did the Streetscape improvements help Downtown, parking, Troy Main Street promotions, and promotions in general.

Questions were open-ended, allowing owners to answer with a variety of responses instead of limited responses. When asked what do you like best about Downtown Troy there were various types of responses, some were the same but most were different. They included:

- Very nice and beautiful;
- Small town feeling with large atmosphere;
- Appearance;
- Atmosphere and safety;
- Wide streets and accessibility;
- Small – convenient to get to places;
- Historical aspect;
- Specialty shops;
- Personal & friendly; and
- The square and fountain area.

When asked what the Downtown needs more of, respondents identified the following responses:

- Parking;
- Outside dining;
- Variety of retail (i.e., drug store, shoe store, quality retail, etc.)
- Community involvement;
- Establishments open past 9:00 p.m.; and
- Ground floor info centers.

For the results of the Downtown Business Opinion Survey, see Appendix G.

GEM Real Estate Group Market Study Of Troy

In August 2003, the Troy Planning and Development Department hired GEM Real Estate Group to conduct a market study of the Troy area. The study area included all land inside the municipal boundaries as well as comparisons with Concord Township, the Dayton Metropolitan Statistical Area, Miami County, Piqua, and Tipp City.

The purpose of conducting the study was to determine the current range of potential land uses throughout the City of Troy and future land uses. The study also gave answers to the following questions:

1. What is the current status of the City and how competitive are existing residential developments;
2. What are the consumer needs in the community;
3. What business opportunities could be developed on the basis of market demand; and
4. How will trends for the future influence land use needs in the City?

Various findings of the Market Study will be discussed in various sections of the Comprehensive Plan. To see a copy of the Executive Summary of the Market Study findings, please see Appendix B.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The goal of public participation in the comprehensive planning process was to allow the citizens of Troy to voice their concerns and opinions about the current situations within Troy. The participation also allowed the citizens to express ideas of how the City of Troy should develop. In addition to numerous staff presentations to community groups and organizations, citizen participation was done in two organized processes; visioning and a community survey.

Visioning

After the City of Troy compiled all of the previously mentioned information and statistics, the next step was to involve the citizens in the planning process. This included holding two public meetings in which citizens were able to define and shape their vision for the City of Troy. The meetings were held to receive public input on the future vision of Troy and to lay the groundwork for the establishment of future goals, strategies, and objectives for this Comprehensive Plan.

A copy of the visioning report published in November 2003 can be found in Appendix I of the Plan. Within this report you will find the results of the two public meetings.

Community Quality Of Life Survey

In the fall of 2003, the City of Troy organized and placed a Quality of Life Survey on its Internet homepage. The Internet survey allowed citizens of Troy to voice their opinions on a variety of topics. Citizens were asked to respond to 23 different questions and could respond with one of the following: very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or no opinion.

The survey results, which are shown in Appendix H, show that 95.2% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of life in Troy while only 3.2% were dissatisfied.

STUDY AREA

The Troy Comprehensive Plan study area includes all areas within the Troy city limits and all of the rural areas of both Concord and Staunton Townships. These areas are often thought of as the Troy community. Comparisons were made to the Miami Valley region as a whole, and Miami County. For purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the Miami Valley region is considered to be all jurisdictions within Clark, Greene, Miami and Montgomery Counties. Piqua, Sidney and Tipp City were also used as comparisons because of their close proximity, and some similarities to Troy.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The City of Troy Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the Planning and Development Department and City officials to use when planning future community and economic development. This plan is divided into fourteen (14) chapters, which individually address different areas of planning concern.